

Message Text

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43

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 COME-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 AID-05

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6066

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, BEXP, CT

SUBJ: VISIT OF SHERATON VICE PRESIDENT TO CAR

1. SHERATON HOTEL'S EUROPEAN AND AFRICAN VICE PRESIDENT, ANDRE MAS, VISITED THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC FROM AUGUST 22 TO 26 AT THE INVITATION OF PRESIDENT BOKASSA, FOLLOWING AN INITIAL MEETING IN PARIS. IN A LONG AND FRANK DISCUSSION WITH THE PRESIDENT, CABINET MINISTERS POTOLOT AND BANGUE-TANDET, AN EMBOFF AND TWO SOUTH AFRICAN BUSINESSMEN, MESSRS ORCHARD AND LEROY, MAS INFORMED THEM THAT THE NEW STATE-ORGANIZED AND SOUTH AFRICAN FINANCED 500-BED HOTEL COMPLEX CURRENTLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN BANGUI DOES NOT MEET INTERNATIONAL DESIGN SPACE AND LOCATION STANDARDS. MAS SUGGESTED THAT IT BE TURNED INTO A HOSPITAL OR LODGING FOR THE UNIVERSITY.

2. AS A COUNTER PROPOSAL MAS SUGGESTED THAT THE GOCAR SHOULD CONSIDER TRANSFORMING THE 70-BED SAFARI HOTEL INTO A 200-BED, FIRST-CLASS DELUXE HOTEL. THIS WOULD REQUIRE CONSIDERABLE CONSTRUCTION AND EXTENSION ONTO THE EXISTING FACILITY WHICH MAS ESTIMATES WILL COST ABOUT SEVEN MILLION DOLLARS. MAS MENTIONED EX-IM BANK AS A POSSIBLE SOURCE OF FINANCING. SHERATON IS WILLING TO CONSIDER UNDERTAKING A MANAGEMENT CONTRACT FOR A REWORKED SAFARI HOTEL, BUT IS NOT REPEAT NOT WILLING TO FINANCE THE RENOVATION.

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3. MAS' FRANK APPROACH WAS WELL RECEIVED BY THE PRESIDENT

ALTHOUGH MUCH OF HIS PERSONAL PRESTIGE IS INVOLVED WITH THE
NEW HOTEL. THE PRESIDENT COMMENTED THAT HE HAD A
POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO BOTH THE CENTRAL AFRICAN PEOPLE WHO
HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE
NEW HOTEL AND TO THE SOUTH AFRICANS WHO ARE PROVIDING
CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS IN THE AMOUNT OF RAND SIX MILLION.
HOWEVER, HE SAID HE WOULD CONSIDER THE PROPOSALS PUT FORTH BY
MAS FOR THE RENOVATION OF THE SAFARI AND IF HE FINDS THEM
ACCEPTABLE, WILL GET THE NECESSARY FINANCING.
SWING

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